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New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Turnquest (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 44 *(continued)*

Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (A/51/48)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/228 and Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/51/48, sect. IV)

Mr. Rantao (Botswana): As I am taking the floor for the first time, allow me to congratulate the President on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Hisashi Owada of Japan, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and his Bureau for the excellent report before this Assembly.

It must be pointed out from the outset that while the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) was a laudable initiative, it lacked a clear operational framework both within the United Nations system itself and at the country level. Moreover, there was no clear framework for coordination between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions with regard to its implementation. Advocacy for the programme at the country level was also very weak.

In this regard, we welcome the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa by the Secretary-General in March of this year. The Special Initiative provides an operational framework for UN-NADAF which has been lacking. The Special Initiative should, however, not be treated as a replacement for UN-NADAF but rather as its complementary arm.

All the reports before the General Assembly on this agenda item clearly indicate that official development assistance flows to Africa fell well below the $30 billion that was the minimum annual target figure required for the implementation of UN-NADAF. Moreover, funding for United Nations operational activities for development has declined significantly over the past few years. This is clearly contrary to the commitments made regarding the implementation of UN-NADAF.

Coincidentally, we are discussing this agenda item during the United Nations Pledging Conference for

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Development Activities. It is our sincere hope that the pledges will be a reflection of the commitment of Member States to the role of the United Nations in the multilateral development process, a United Nations which can complement national efforts in meeting the objectives that have been spelled out in past international conferences.

While it is appreciated that not all official development assistance flows can be channelled through the United Nations system, Botswana shares the view that the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies should be strengthened and provided with adequate resources to participate in the development process where they have a comparative advantage.

While African States have reaffirmed their primary responsibility for the development of their countries, the globalization of the world economy makes it imperative that we seek global solutions to the development problems with which our countries are grappling. Africa expects the unswerving support and cooperation of the international community in this regard.

The growth of the African economies will in the end not benefit Africa alone, but the developed countries as well. Growing and vibrant African economies will usher in prospects for global trade between Africa and the rest of the world.

In this connection, we welcome the latest initiative by the World Bank to raise the ceiling for debt relief for the highly indebted poor countries from 67 per cent to 80 per cent. Botswana calls for flexibility in the implementation of the initiative to ensure that all affected countries will benefit. Experience has illustrated that only a handful of countries have benefited from past initiatives because of lack of flexibility.

With regard to trade, Botswana shares the view that the international community should support the efforts of African countries in the development and maintenance of trade infrastructures in order to cope with future challenges and benefit fully from multilateral trade arrangements, especially following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round. In this connection, we wish to recognize the important work being undertaken by the International Trade Centre and the Commonwealth Secretariat to prepare the Governments of the developing countries fully for the implementation of the Uruguay Round.

My delegation also calls for the continued support of the United Nations and the international community to help the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) to implement its regional programme.

My delegation supports the recommendation contained in paragraph 92 of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee regarding poverty eradication and the implementation of the 20/20 concept, which was adopted by the Social Summit. The eradication of poverty remains one of the central themes of the Botswana Government's policy.

The Government of Botswana, in conjunction with United Nations representatives, is currently preparing a country strategy note for the period 1997-2003 which covers some of the priorities identified in UN-NADAF, including the question of poverty eradication.

It is the hope of my delegation that in the light of the shortcomings that were identified during the mid-term review, concerted efforts will be undertaken to implement UN-NADAF successfully during the last five years of its life.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): We have before us the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, contained in document A/51/48. My delegation agrees with the Ad Hoc Committee's evaluation of the limited progress achieved so far, as well as with its recommendations for further measures to attain the goals of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF).

The agreement on the New Agenda for Africa, five years ago, represented a bargain. The African States reaffirmed their primary responsibility for the development of their countries, while the international community committed itself to supporting their efforts for the development of Africa. Concrete commitments were undertaken by all parties for the attainment of well-defined goals in a given time-frame.

The mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda underlines sad realities. Five years after its adoption, the goals of UN-NADAF, as set out in resolution 46/151, remain elusive. Many of the critical social and economic problems that led to the adoption of the resolution still exist. Some progress has been achieved, but in relation to the objectives that were set, most remains to be done. Some 45 to 50 per cent of the

inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa today live below the poverty line. Unless reduced substantially, the incidence of poverty and the rate of population growth in the region will threaten economic stability and growth, and will undermine social stability in most of Africa.

The Secretary-General has reported that there has been forward movement in Africa in redefining the respective roles of the State and the private sector. Initiatives have been taken to promote private entrepreneurship and to improve the business environment. The majority of African countries have engaged in constitutional reform. During the past five years, civic organizations have emerged in nearly every country. All this has resulted in significant improvement in the overall economic performance of Africa, the number of countries recording negative growth rates dropping from 19 in 1993 to 3 in 1995. The number of countries that achieved the target of 6 per cent annual growth in gross domestic product increased from 3 in 1992 to 12 in 1995.

A report of the African Development Bank released in October 1996 attributes the significant improvement in Africa's economic performance during 1995 to the fact that a growing number of countries in the region have been able to establish conditions necessary for macroeconomic stability and sustainable growth. Despite these developments, Africa's outstanding external debt totalled approximately $306 billion in December 1995. This is an increase of $14 billion over 1994.

While Africa's medium-term economic outlook is promising, sustainable development over the long term calls for strategies and policies well beyond the framework of adjustment programmes. It is gratifying to see that the African Governments have made significant progress in several areas, particularly in the areas of macroeconomic reforms and governance. In fact, the progress in regard to Africa's development in recent years has been made possible by the determination of the African States to move forward on their part of the bargain enshrined in UN-NADAF. The African economies need to consolidate the gains from macroeconomic reforms that are essential for recovery and growth.

As against the efforts made by the African countries themselves, it is disheartening to see that the international community's contribution is none too inspiring. The international community has little to show on the promises it made to Africa, especially in the context of UN-NADAF.

Some palliative measures have been taken in the areas of debt trade preferences and export compensatory mechanisms. But these have clearly been insufficient, not only in relation to what needs to be done, but more disappointingly, in relation to the commitments that were solemnly made.

A key feature of UN-NADAF was the tangible goal of providing a minimum of net official development assistance of $30 billion in 1992, a figure that was to increase at an average rate of 4 per cent thereafter. This target remains unfulfilled. In fact, ironically, resource flows to Africa have declined since UN-NADAF was agreed upon.

My delegation supports the adoption of the draft resolution in document A/51/48 recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

My delegation is confident that, as in the past, the African States will continue to make all possible efforts to accomplish the goals of UN-NADAF. Let us not forget that the efforts of Africa alone will never be enough. Let us not succumb to the temptation to sermonize on what Africa needs to do further to help itself. Africa is fully aware of the challenges confronting it, and understands the solution to its problems. What Africa needs is enough resources to ensure the accomplishment of UN-NADAF's goals.

Given the magnitude of resources required for achieving these goals, it is imperative that the international community honour its commitment to Africa through concrete measures. Failure to do so will redound adversely not only on Africa, but on the international community as a whole. The international community should therefore rededicate itself to UN-NADAF, and respond positively and effectively to the needs of Africa before it is too late.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), whose mid-term review focused the attention of the international community just a few weeks ago, is an issue to which my delegation attaches the highest importance.

The documents for this agenda item contain valuable information concerning the measures taken by the Governments of African countries and by the international community to attain the targets set in the programme. I wish particularly to refer to document A/51/228/Add.1, prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa, which mirrors that region's problems in their true magnitude and their daunting nature.

It is essential for this debate and whatever resolution we may adopt to help to prompt steps that will make it possible to relaunch the Agenda for the Development of Africa in the light of the results of the mid-term review. This will ultimately depend on the political resolve of each and every country, and particularly the developed countries, for which assistance to Africa is without question a matter of elementary historical justice.

Cuba also believes that the wealth extracted from that continent over centuries should now be returned to Africa by the affluent and comfortable societies that were in fact built using Africa's resources.

However, despite the efforts of African countries to make better use of official development assistance, the total volume of official development assistance in Africa has continued to fall from almost $25 billion in 1990 to less than $21 billion in 1993, a figure that is well below the objective of $30 billion set as the target in UN-NADAF and also far from the subsequent annual 4 per cent increase envisaged.

While there has been impressive growth in direct foreign investment in the developing countries overall, since the beginning of the 1990s less than 2 per cent of these flows have gone to Africa. The absolute figures are comparable only with those for 1985, when the economic crisis on that continent came to a head. Africa's share in world trade declined from 5 per cent in 1980 to 2.1 per cent in 1995. At a time when there is so much talk about globalization and its benefits and potential for all, there are many indicators that foreshadow a still marginalized Africa, where most countries will have been literally excluded from markets for goods and services, financial markets and capital and technological flows.

In spite of the hardships and wrenching efforts involved in the reform processes under way in some countries, savings and investment rates continue to be extremely low, terms of trade have worsened, the region's balance-of-payments deficit has increased and levels of external debt remain unsustainable. Millions of men, women and children live in despair and abject poverty. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, 10 million AIDS sufferers have been identified, more than half of them women.

Africa's problems are of such magnitude that they demand special and extraordinary efforts. For this reason, we welcome the launching of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa as a complement to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and as a framework for the cooperation of the whole of the United Nations system aiming at a genuine mobilization of the operational activities of the New Agenda for Africa. Similarly, we hail the recent initiatives and Conferences on African Development sponsored by Japan, as well as other steps taken by certain European countries.

At the same time, however much we may wish to do so, it would be premature to describe the isolated and not yet sustained indicators of economic growth in certain countries of the region as signs of "tangible progress", as does the report in document A/51/228. Such euphoria serves only to blind us to the destitution in which entire peoples are living.

With its modest economic and financial resources and in spite of the limitations inherent in its status as a small developing country, Cuba has provided and continues to provide significant cooperation and technical assistance to many African countries. Cuban teachers, doctors, engineers and technicians continue to make their contribution to the economic and social development of that continent without expecting the slightest material reward for their work. Tens of thousands of African students have also attended Cuban schools to study a wide variety of specialized subjects. I mention this in all humility simply to give a practical and tangible example to show that such efforts can succeed in the short term if there is a genuine will to do so.

Cuba is proud of its Afro-Hispanic origins and culture and wishes today to ratify its historical and abiding commitment to Africa.

Ms. Valencia (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to address this plenary meeting of the General Assembly on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on an issue of great importance to the Movement and developing countries: the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The adoption of the New Agenda in December 1991 reflected the United Nations recognition of the pressing need to make the question of Africa high priority for the decade. It also reflected the General Assembly's recognition of the profound economic and social crisis being experienced by the continent. It was considered a matter of urgency to create new mechanisms and indicate new directions to secure the required international support to deal with such a tragic situation.

The overwhelming burden of external debt, excessive dependence on a few commodities, rapid population growth, serious deterioration of nutritional indicators, environmental degradation — with the recurring problems of drought and desertification — social tensions and ongoing conflicts reveal only part of the grave consequences of increasing marginalization of African countries from the world economy. In Africa poverty and suffering have reached levels unknown in any other part of the world.

In the midst of such a complex situation, the African countries are deploying their own efforts to implement the New Agenda commitments. Economic reform policies, promotion of subregional and regional cooperation, agricultural development, promotion of appropriate environmental and demographic policies and encouragement of democratic processes are examples of those countries' efforts to face the challenges before them.

In many African countries the overwhelming burden of the external debt is such that resources that would otherwise be earmarked for meeting urgent social needs must be devoted to debt payments. The Non-Aligned Movement will therefore continue its actions to convince the international community, in particular the creditor countries and the multilateral financial institutions, to adopt an effective solution to the external debt problem.

We will also insist that priority should be given to the diversification of African economies, support for the regional and subregional integration programmes on the continent, the fulfilment of agreed targets for official development assistance and the effective implementation of commitments adopted at recent United Nations international conferences, in particular those relating to the critical situation in Africa.

Africa is a marvellous continent of enormous potential. We reaffirm our confidence in its peoples, its diversity, its wealth and its human resources. Let us support Africa's efforts to build its own future. The immense significance of this enterprise should be expressed through the clear resolve by the United Nations and the international community to fully implement the New Agenda. Solidarity is the hope of the peoples of Africa. Let us work to provide it.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The Philippine delegation congratulates Ambassador Owada, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), and to his country, Japan, for its concrete and specific contributions to the development of Africa.

We now have an assessment of the achievements of the first five years of the UN-NADAF, as well as concrete and specific recommendations for its full implementation.

It is gratifying to note that the African countries have exerted their best efforts to implement their part of UN-NADAF. Reform measures have been adopted to liberalize domestic prices and external trade. These countries have made monetary adjustments, and many of them have taken steps to improve public finance management. By and large, the countries of the continent have made laudable achievements in macroeconomic reform and governance.

Their efforts, in fact, have already had a positive impact on their economies, as summarized in the Secretary-General's report, submitted at the mid-term review. The international community should, however, temper its expectations because the tentative indications of growth recently shown by a number of these countries cannot yet be perceived as a pattern that can be sustained or emulated quickly by other African countries, particularly the least developed among them. The international community should not forget that Africa is the only region of the world to have suffered from a continuous economic decline since 1980.

The continent's inability to maximize the benefits from foreign trade and international financial flows cannot be allowed to persist if the international community sincerely expects the continent to realize sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

Africa's share in world exports fell from 2.9 per cent in 1990 to 2.2 per cent in 1994. Official development assistance has also fallen in real terms since

1990. The continent also carries a heavy burden of external indebtedness, principally official bilateral and multilateral debts.

It is evident that the international community has yet to implement fully its part of UN-NADAF. In one key area, the target of net official development assistance of $30 billion in 1992, with an increment of an annual average rate of 4 per cent in the years thereafter, was not met. Instead, it decreased. My delegation believes that the international community has the resources and capabilities adequately to support the full implementation of UN-NADAF. More than once in the not-so-distant past, the international community was able to demonstrate its ability to muster the required political will and resources that quickly changed the course of development of some groups of countries.

African countries have exerted their best efforts and continue to do so. But there must be an accompanying favourable external environment to enable their efforts to produce the required results. The external environment must be supportive of the identified critical interventions for African development and recovery in such areas as the diversification of their export products, intensification of regional integration, human resource development, the provision of adequate resource flows and durable solutions to their external debts.

Africa's continued reliance on a small number of export products has left it extremely vulnerable to the fast-changing market conditions of the world economy. Economic diversification is a compelling need for Africa.

It has been identified that economic cooperation and regional integration among these countries could be key to their development because, as with other successful regional cooperation, new markets are created. While efforts towards regional cooperation and integration must continue, we also believe that appropriate infrastructures must be provided to interconnect the African countries.

Human resource development has been shown in the experience of many countries to be a critical component of development. Invariably, without trained, healthy and productive men and women, economic growth and progress would be impossible. The continuing development crisis of Africa has seriously hampered its strides in human resources development. The recently issued human development report has confirmed this finding.

It is also disturbing that resources are flowing out of Africa when they might have been utilized in the continent. Africa's debts are a major obstacle to its ability to recover and develop. The international community is well aware of concrete proposals to address the unsustainable debts of Africa. Concrete action has to go beyond the Naples terms and any effective solution to multilateral debts must encompass a greater number of countries in the continent. Clearly, it is up to the international community to provide the appropriate response.

We in the developing world can easily feel the gravity of the situation in Africa, the difficult circumstances in the continent and the urgency for required action, because we see an Africa in many parts of our countries. There is much that we ourselves can do to contribute in a meaningful way to the implementation of UN-NADAF. Individually or through our collective efforts, we have implemented programmes and projects to enhance economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. South-South cooperation is becoming an important dimension for greater cooperation among developing countries and the mid-term review has recognized such a dimension of development cooperation.

My country, the Philippines, for instance, has implemented a small programme of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries funded by the national budget and a number of African countries have been beneficiaries of the various projects we have carried out in this regard. But South-South cooperation can at best provide a modest complement to the full efforts of the internationally community in seeing to it that adequate resources and other forms of support can flow to the continent and enable the African countries to participate fully in a globalizing and increasingly interdependent world.

The Acting President: In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly yesterday at its fiftieth plenary meeting, I now call on the Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See): As it does in every discussion on development, the Holy See wishes to underscore the centrality of the human person. This centrality is enshrined in the first Principle of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development:

> "Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a

> healthy and productive life in harmony with nature." *(A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I), p. 3)*

In the discussion of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of African the 1990s, the community of nations must be willing to make this centrality a reality. The essential role that the human person plays in the formulation of a viable plan for action and development must forever go beyond the written page and debate and be put into practice.

In any consideration of an agenda for development in Africa, the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development merits greater attention. The Summit's Programme of Action identifies:

> "Enhancing positive interaction between environmental, economic and social policies [as] essential for success in the longer term" *(A/CONF.166/9, annex II, para. 2)*

and notes that this is to be done

> "with full respect for the various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of its people, and in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms." *(Ibid., annex I, para. 28)*

Since independence, African countries have turned to donor nations, often their former colonial rulers, and to international financial institutions for guidance and growth. The guidance seems to have become a kind of economic receivership. The policies of many African nations are decided in a cycle of meetings with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, donors and creditors.

Rates of growth in Africa have been questioned because they are low. These low rates have sometimes resulted in criticism and decreasing assistance. But the low rates can be clearly linked to such considerations as the fact that Africa receives only about 3 per cent of all foreign direct investment flows. However, Africa is no less capable of growth if given the levels of foreign direct investment that are found in countries with economies experiencing growth. The key to growth is granting producers and consumers the economic freedom to enjoy and respond to incentives and providing safety nets in necessary cases.

Foreign assistance for Africa is now being placed in question by some people. It is said to make little difference to growth and development in Africa. However, to get the economies of African countries charted towards more positive growth rates, aid levels should be made more generous, not reduced, for a period of time. Following a pre-announced sliding scale, certain basic areas should serve as categories for initial high levels of assistance. These areas, would include, among others, human capital — human beings using their skills — equipment and roads. Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Letter summarizing the conclusions of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, outlined further areas for which such prompt interventions and assistance are necessary. These include

> "malnutrition, the widespread deterioration in the standard of living, the insufficiency of means for educating the young, the lack of elementary health and social services with the resulting persistence of endemic diseases, the spread of the terrible scourge of AIDS, the heavy and often unbearable burden of international debt, [and] the horror of fratricidal wars fomented by unscrupulous arms trafficking, the shameful and pitiable spectacle of refugees and displaced persons". *(Ecclesia in Africa, No. 114)*

The very general areas of emphasis suggested here in targeting increased foreign aid should not allow the overflow of conditionality that is so common today and should be discontinued. This often reflects more on the weaknesses or preoccupations of the donors than on the true needs of the recipient country. It is the African people themselves who, committing themselves to

> "good administration of public affairs in the two interrelated areas of politics and the economy" *(Ecclesia in Africa, No. 110)*

should be allowed to foster development without the burden of excessive linkages and conditionalities too often found in aid packages.

Particular sensitivities are required when addressing the population questions of the African continent. As is well known, the discussion continues as to how population growth relates to development and the eradication of poverty. Specialists have not yet arrived at a conclusion in this regard, since their beliefs fall on both sides of the issue. But the documentation prepared on this item seems clearly to have decided in favour of population control policies and against strategies advocating development through poverty eradication. The great number of reservations that have surrounded this issue, both at the Conference on Population and

Development and subsequent conferences, demonstrate the lack of any true consensus in this regard.

In the documentation on this item, the critical issues section contains a subsection on human development and capacity-building composed of 12 paragraphs and subparagraphs. Six of these — one half of the total — refer to population issues, while only two are dedicated to education, and a single paragraph addresses employment. The potential of this valuable resource of the continent of Africa — Africans themselves — deserves more attention. One is challenged to consider the nature of the real agenda for this topic.

Lack of peace on the African continent has clearly diminished development. This is mostly evidenced in its impact on the African people themselves, particularly women and children. "An Agenda for Development" states that

> "Development is a fundamental human right. Development is the most secure basis for peace." (*A/48/935, para. 3*)

That message is echoed in the report of the Secretary-General that is being considered today, which states:

> "Sustainable development cannot occur without peace, which requires proactive efforts towards conflict prevention, management and resolution." (*A/51/228, para. 13*)

Peace, of course, is not easily guaranteed, especially since so many in Africa today suffer from ethnic and political strife. Once again, we turn to "An Agenda for Development", which states

> "While there is war, no State is securely at peace. While there is want, no people can achieve lasting development." (*A/48/935, para. 15*).

Only through the promotion of peace through social justice, respect for human rights, the building up of a State based on law and the fostering of authentic democracy will economic and social development occur in Africa.

I wish to conclude with the words of His Holiness Pope John Paul II upon his return from his eleventh pastoral visit to Africa:

> "How can one not be touched by the Africans' human warmth? How can one forget the colours, sounds and rhythms of that land? They are the dance of life, the triumph of life! Unfortunately, once again I have seen with my own eyes this continent's problems. Africa bears the scars of its long history of humiliations. This continent has too frequently been considered only for selfish interests. Today, Africa is asking to be loved and respected for what it is. It does not ask for compassion, it asks for solidarity."

There is hope for the people of Africa. May this discussion help to fuel that hope.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX) of 11 October 1965, I now call on the Permanent Observer for the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Sy (Organization of African Unity): I should like, at the beginning of this statement, to express on behalf of the Organization of African Unity warm congratulations to all members of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the effective and timely completion of the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). At the same time, I would personally like to commend the excellent coordination of the review exercise under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Hisashi Owada, the Permanent Representative of Japan.

The review exercise has once again demonstrated the spirit of partnership for development which has evolved in the United Nations over the years. The review was for the most part much more concerned with what has to be done in order to achieve the objectives established by UN-NADAF in 1991. There was a clear understanding of what African countries themselves have done since the adoption of the programme. The various political and economic reforms adopted by many African countries have started to produce positive results on economic growth and development in some countries and have laid the basis for sustainable economic growth and development in others. For some others in the continent, however, the problems of economic development remain very acute.

At the same time, the review exercise has acknowledged the commitment of the international community and the ongoing transformation of the international economy. The international community continues to show concern for Africa in all the major global programmes on the promotion of international

development, while the globalization and liberalization of the world economy tend to marginalize the economically weak countries.

As we approach the beginning of the next century, African countries, I must emphasize, continue to lay great store in the international community and in the relief which UN-NADAF could bring to their ailing economies. The consolidation of the gains made so far by many African countries will be difficult without greater commitment and support from the international community. All these points have been well articulated in the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee. However, while not attempting to restate these measures, permit me to underscore that the way forward in the implementation of the objectives of UN-NADAF and in the promotion of authentic development in Africa should include prioritizing development strategies.

One cardinal issue requiring urgent attention in the last phase of UN-NADAF is external trade. The international community should effectively support African efforts at trade facilitation and market access. The trading partners of African countries should consider further reduction in tariffs and the removal of non-tariff barriers on African products. This process should be complemented by adequate support for the diversification of African economies. In this regard, States participating in the African Development Fund of the African Development Bank would go a long way towards assisting trade expansion by making an initial, adequate special contribution to finance the preparatory phase of commodity diversification projects and programmes.

The promotion of sustainable economic growth and sustained development in African countries during the remaining lifespan of UN-NADAF may well hinge on the extent to which the question of resource flows is adequately addressed by the international community. The impact of the reforms and the present economic conditions of many African countries suggest that additional new resources are urgently needed. Attempts should be made by those countries which have not done so to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product in official development assistance to African countries. The international community should facilitate the flow of foreign direct investment to African countries, since most of the countries have made major improvements in the environment for investment.

At the same time, greater efforts should be made to relieve the debt burden of the indebted countries. While the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative is a step in the right direction, we would welcome substantial contributions to its fund by the creditor countries and international financial institutions. Also, the conditions governing whether countries can benefit from the initiative should not be too stringent so that the more indebted African countries can benefit from it.

In addition to this, I wish to underscore that regional economic integration remains, in the long run, a crucial strategy for promoting enduring development in the continent and a complement to national economic policies on economic growth and development. The African Economic Community is the foremost force for economic integration in the continent. The process of development in African countries would be further accelerated if the international community supported the work of the Community.

Allow me to say in conclusion that international development is a question of self-enlightenment. Poverty knows no boundaries. It generates immigration problems, provokes conflicts and has linkages with international terrorism. Africa has a potential market of more than 600 million people. The development of the continent would be to everyone's advantage.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this item.

At the request of several delegations, action on the draft resolution contained in section IV of document A/51/48 will be taken at a later date to be announced.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.